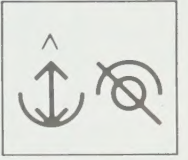


COMMUNICATING TOGETHER



A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE ABOUT AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 1

MARCH 1987



CONTENTS

3	EDUCATING JULIE	SHIRLEY McNAUGHTON
	FAMILY AND COMMUNITY	
5	A Breakthrough	ANDREW MURPHY
6	ESCI Trainee Receives Award	
	AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION	
7	Developing Direct Selection	IRIS FISHMAN
	INTERNATIONAL NEWS	
9	ISSAC News	
9	Communication in Italy	ELIZABETH INGRASSIA
	MACHINES, COMPUTERS AND THINGS	
10	Communicating with the Pocket Speech Aid	DAVID KEATING
11	The Power of the Modem	JIM PETRONE
11	Multi-Talk Communication Aid	
	BLISSYMBOL TALK	
12	Blissymbols and Gifted Children	CLAUDIA WOOD
13	A Blissymbol Recipe for a Yogurt Dessert	
	THE PARAPHRASE	
14	My First Panel Meeting	ANN RUNNING AND CATHY FAIRLEY
	PERSPECTIVE	
15	An Interview with Mary Stacey	SHIRLEY McNAUGHTON
	RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS	
17	A Wholistic Approach	GEB VERBURG
	TEACHING AND LEARNING	
19	Yes I Can Play — with Adaptive Toys	ANNE WARRICK
21	NEW RELEASES	
22	SCHEDULE OF EVENTS	



VOL. 5, NO. 1

MARCH 1987

Established November 1982
Published quarterly by the Easter Seal Communication Institute (formerly Blissymbolics Communication Institute).

Executive Director: Shirley McNaughton
Editor: Ann Kennedy
Design: Jack Steiner
Typesetting and Printing:
The Beacon Herald, Stratford,
Ontario

Cover Picture: Julie Robson with her teacher,
John Patterson

The contents are copyright

Second Class Mail Registration No. 7093

Communicating Together is published quarterly as a means of sharing the experiences and communication systems of nonspeaking people with their families, communities and the professionals who work with them.

The cover design reflects, directly and indirectly, the many techniques that contribute to augmentative communication: pictures, drawings, signing, Blissymbols, words and technology.

Back Issues: Limited number available, \$5. Canadian funds.

Subscription Rate: \$20. per year Canadian funds, \$15. per year U.S. funds. Subscriptions outside North America \$25. per year Canadian funds. ISAAC Members \$5. discount on each of the above rates.

Direct correspondence regarding subscriptions, back issues, contributions, sponsoring, advertising, address changes and bulk mailings to:
Communicating Together
Easter Seal Communication Institute
24 Ferrand Drive
Don Mills, Ontario, Canada M3C 3N2

Communicating Together is an affiliated publication of the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC).

The Publisher

The Easter Seal Communication Institute (ESCI) wishes to recognize and thank the Pilot Club International, Ontario District, for its support in sponsoring sections of *Communicating Together*.

ESCI gratefully acknowledges funding by the Kiwanis Club of Toronto to support the typesetting font development. Blissymbols presented herein have been electronically typeset.

ESCI is a member of the Canadian Rehabilitation Council for the Disabled (CRCDD) and the Canadian Periodical Publishers Association (CPPA).

ESCI is a Registered Charity in Canada, number 0459677-21-13.

EDUCATING JULIE: THE PROCESS AND THE PEOPLE

SHIRLEY McNAUGHTON

Shirley McNaughton is the executive director of the newly named Easter Seal Communication Institute (formerly Blissymbolics Communication Institute and Augmentative and Alternative Communication with Education). In her role as consultant within the educational support service of the Institute, she wrote the following article in collaboration with Margaret and Peter Robson. It serves as a sharing of the way in which the Institute works with parents and educators toward better educational opportunities for students who use augmentative communication systems.

This is an article about process — the *process* of educating a particular child with special needs. But, of course, the process exists because of the child, and must include all of the people who support and contribute to the child's educational program. So this is also an article about *people*. It is not a vignette with a clear happy or sad story line; it is a glimpse into a long-term effort to create learning opportunities for a unique individual. It involves many persons who bring diverse perspectives and who have either primary or secondary roles to play. Their interaction with each other and with the child creates the educational process. The participants determine whether the process will stimulate, encourage and optimize learning or whether it will reduce attention and interest and minimize opportunities for personal growth.

Involved throughout are Julie Robson, student, and her parents Margaret and Peter. Coming and going through the years, as circumstances allow and dictate are a host of other short-term (given a lifetime perspective) and intermittent supporters — people who will directly or indirectly participate in Julie's educational experience. Providing the structure through which Julie's educational program will be planned and implemented is the Frontenac County Board of Education, supported by a range of services including

Julie's pediatrician, Dr. Brian Wherrett; the Easter Seal Society district nurse, Nesta Wiskin; the Child Development Centre, Kingston; the Augmentative Communication Service, Hugh MacMillan Medical Centre, Toronto; and the Easter Seal Communication Institute (ESCI), Toronto.

Of critical importance every year, is Julie's teacher who must draw upon the best from each of the resources available and apply them within the classroom to Julie's and her classmates' benefit. This year her teacher is John Paterson — a very special teacher for a very special student.

Process is defined in Webster as "continuing development involving many changes". Margaret and Peter often identify the need for change in Julie's program. Implementation of change has been the responsibility of the many educators involved in Julie's educational program over the years. From his position as assistant superintendent, Frontenac County Board of Education, Colin Vickers facilitates the process. There's a complex structure surrounding this sixteen-year-old's educational program. The process always requires fine tuning.

A Portrait of Julie

The focus of it all is Julie. As described by her mother:

Julie is our youngest child and lives at home with us. She has two older, married brothers. Her medical diagnosis is cerebral palsy. She is nonverbal and uses Blissymbols. She has had a spinal fusion. There was some damage to the nerves at the time of the fusion which has added to her problems. She is a people person, very friendly but a little bit shy sometimes. She has a very good sense of humour. At age sixteen, her life revolves around her family, and family members. She knows who she is and where she stands in the universe, I think. Her self esteem is pretty good, considering all the medical problems she has been through.

She's happy more than she's sad. There are times of unhappiness, when people don't understand what she's trying to communicate. She's very sensitive to people being impatient with her and not knowing that she's just trying to communicate in a way they don't want to accept. But she's also very persistent if she really wants to do something herself. No amount of saying "Can I help you?" will make her let you help her.

Educational Goals

Margaret and Peter Robson are supportive of the current educational goals that they helped define for Julie: to show increased independence and initiation of communication; to be meaningfully integrated into the regular program as much as possible; to improve her communication through increased use of her augmentative communication system; to become more responsible for her own care and activities; and to maintain her physical level of functioning. They know as well, however, that it will be the manner in which these goals are implemented that will determine their value for Julie. They realize that Julie must be a participant, not an observer, in her



Julie with her friend, Mike Bettie.

integrated experience. They recognize that some modifications are necessary in physical facilities and devices and that her educators must have training and understanding in order that the integration goals for Julie will be met. They emphasize the need to focus upon what she is able to do, not on what she is physically unable to do, in activities directed toward becoming more independent, self-initiating and assuming responsibility. They are determined as they stress that the educator's responsibility is *to find out how Julie's communication system works, not to change it*. They believe strongly that they are the best people to provide the teacher with information about Julie and her way of communicating. They have sixteen years of experience!

The good years come when Julie has a teacher who is a good communicator, with strong educational competence and a willingness to accept information and suggestions from her parents. 1986-87 is one of those school years! John Paterson and his non-teaching assistant, Donna Eves, are providing an educational program for Julie in which the broad goals have been clearly defined. As teacher, Mr. Paterson has taken responsibility for setting the goals, but the *process* through which they have been developed and through which they will be implemented gives ample opportunity for input by the Robsons.

Also contributing directly to this year's program is Carolyn Benjamin, speech pathologist at the Child Development Centre. She has provided consultation to Margaret, who has produced Julie's new communication board, and liaised with Maggie Axford, school speech pathologist.

Next year the responsibilities will likely change, as different priorities are set for Julie. The on-stage characters will vary, but off-stage, the resources will be there should the Robsons decide to request them.

ESCI Has a Role on Julie's Team

It was through the Robsons that, in the spring of 1986, the Institute was invited to become involved, to support educational planning as needed and to complement the community-based services already available to Julie. For several years the Robsons and the school administration had experienced difficulties in agreeing

on the provision of educational services for Julie. This had led to confrontation on a number of occasions. Despite many meetings and much discussion, the results still had not been satisfactory to the Robsons. In preparation for the 1986-87 school year, the Robsons requested an educational planning meeting to which an ESCI consultant was invited. It was held on May 30, 1986 and enabled parents, pediatrician and representatives from Frontenac County School Board, Child Development Centre and ESCI to coordinate the ways in which they would contribute to Julie's program. During the current school year, an ESCI consultant has contributed to the vocabulary selection and display organization for the new communication board developed by Margaret Robson and Carolyn Benjamin. Another ESCI consultant has been able to discuss with mother and teacher specific activities through which the educational goals for Julie can be realized. Preparation for future living situations has been included in the learning experiences planned for Julie. John Paterson strives for learning to be relevant to the environments in which his students function. Discussions with the consultant allowed him to look ahead to the possible environments in which Julie will live as an adult and to plan communication and interaction experiences directed toward these future environments.

Plans have been made for a school visit by an ESCI consultant to orientate other students in Julie's school to augmentative communication.

But most important, ESCI has had the opportunity to contribute to the process of school and family working together toward the best long-term educational program for Julie.

Margaret Robson concedes they've been the kind of parents who are seen as a "spearhead with a point on it", that they've always wanted *more* for Julie and have never given up trying to get it. She also admits their strong frustration and disappointment when they have been unable to achieve satisfactory programs. They have experienced many clashes during their struggle for educational opportunities to meet Julie's needs.

In observing the results both positive and negative from parents,

teachers, speech pathologists, therapists, doctors, nurses, administrators and consultants, all interacting on Julie's behalf through the years, I can't help but focus upon the role of communication in the process. The good years included constructive relationships, parents and professionals working together with shared goals. The poor years contained tension and misunderstanding, with conflicting perceptions of motives and objectives. Margaret defines a good teacher as one who knows how to teach and how to communicate. She sees a good learning situation for Julie as one in which she has caring people and in which her communication is understood. She stresses that communication between teacher and parents is critical to the educational process.

As ESCI expands its service to educators in Ontario, it will be exciting to try to apply to the planning of students' programs, the communication knowledge we've learned in working with augmentative communicators. Our hope is that our efforts will bring enriched educational opportunities to Julie and the many other Ontario students who use augmentative communication. I expect that every person who participates in the process will improve his or her own communicative abilities. Enhanced communication for those of us able to speak is but one of the benefits to be gained from working together toward improved education programs for augmentative communicators.

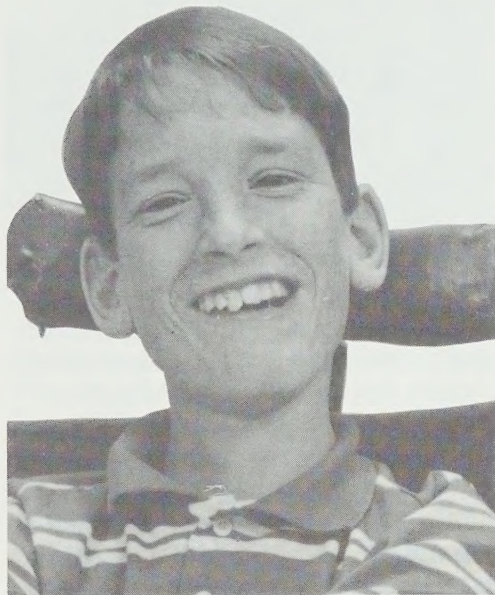
A challenging process — but with benefits to us all! □

Resources

- The Easter Seal Society, Suite 404, 797 Princess Street, Kingston, Ontario K7L 1G1
- Child Development Centre, Hotel Dieu Hospital, 166 Brock Street, Kingston, Ontario K7L 5G2
- Augmentative Communication Service, (ACS) Hugh MacMillan Medical Centre, 350 Rumsey Road, Toronto, Ontario M4G 1R8
- Easter Seal Communication Institute (ESCI), 24 Ferrand Drive, Don Mills, Ontario M3C 2N2.

A Breakthrough

ANDREW MURPHY



Andrew Murphy has been the editor of the Family and Community Section of Communicating Together since the magazine began in 1982. A Blissymbol user for many years, he now uses the Mod Keyboard for written communication. Last year Andrew and his family moved to Florida, but he was anxious to continue his association with us. Writing with the help of his father Mark, he shares his perspective with readers, and includes the stories and experiences of other augmentative communication families.

Returning to Countryside High School in Clearwater, Florida, after spending time in Toronto and at Blue Mountain Camp last summer, I was concerned about being with people who did not know how to communicate with me. My mom had enrolled me in a communications class, and I was anxious to see what it was all about. The teacher asked my mom to speak to the class and explain about me and Blissymbols. It was great. After that many of the kids started talking to me, and I have made new friends. The newspaper came and interviewed our class. This is some of what they printed.

From the St. Petersburg Times

For the first three weeks of school this year, Andrew Murphy sat in

total silence at the back of Wilma Splawn's speech class at Countryside High School.

Each day, 38 students came and went from that classroom, where students are taught the basics of interpersonal communications. They never said hello to Andrew. They never said goodbye. During class they stared at the disturbing person who had invaded their space.

Andrew didn't stare back. His head fell forward. He drooled and grimaced. His skinny arms stuck out at odd angles from his body. His feet fell off the footrest of his wheelchair, making loud clump-clumps that made everyone turn and look.

Andrew, 18, can't speak. Because of brain damage caused during a difficult forceps delivery at birth, he is incapable of talking or walking. He can't use his arms or control his body movements.

But Andrew is a bright, fun-loving, ambitious teenager trapped in a body that won't let him be what he wants to be. The day his fellow students realized that and began to talk to him, they learned about communication of the rarest sort — communication that relies on the sharing of spirits instead of words.

Today Mrs. Splawn's classroom is a joyful place, especially for Andrew. He is surrounded by students who

tease him, ruffle his hair, work hard to understand him and make him laugh. One day when Andrew laboriously spelled out on a word board the sentence "I like this class," all the students applauded.

Andrew, who moved here from Toronto with his family a year ago, is able to communicate in a limited way. He tilts his head to the right to mean "yes" and to the left for "no". He turns his eyes toward words or phrases printed on a lap board so that people — through a difficult process of elimination and guesswork — can figure out what he wants to say.

At home he has a computer with two screens. Commonly used words and phrases appear on one screen. By pressing back on a specially designed headrest, he can select the words he wants and display them on the other screen. Then he can make a printout of what he has written.

Andrew uses the computer to do his homework. But it's a slow process. Producing one page of large type can take more than an hour. And Andrew's reading and spelling abilities are limited because it is difficult to teach those subjects to people who cannot speak.

Andrew's parents did not know immediately after his birth how physically disabled their first child would be. Although they knew he



Andrew Murphy communicates with his classmates at Countryside High. Photo: Steve Hasel

suffered brain damage, he smiled and laughed and followed objects with his eyes like any normal infant.

The Murphy's wanted a large family. They had three more children: Mark, now 17, Jeff, 16, and Erin, 14. And they did everything that an active family does.

"We've never overprotected him or sheltered him, and he always did what our other kids did," Mrs. Murphy said.

In Toronto at the Hugh Mac-Millan Medical Centre, Andrew received physical therapy, schooling and instruction in some basic non-verbal communication systems. But all of his classmates were handicapped.

When the family moved to Clearwater a year ago, Andrew's parents looked forward to placing him in some classes with non-handicapped students. But they also worried.

"The special education people reassured us that he would do fine," Mrs. Murphy said. "We knew he was bright, but he was never challenged. It was always our concern that people would underestimate him and never see his potential because he is nonverbal."

When teacher Wilma Splawn discovered that Andrew had signed up for her speech class, she worried, too. She had taught only one physically handicapped child and never a child who couldn't speak.

Her first attempts to communicate with Andrew using the word board resulted in frustration for both of them. And the other students in the class seemed unwilling or unable to talk to Andrew.

In desperation, Mrs. Splawn invited Mrs. Murphy to the classroom to talk about her son. Mrs. Murphy answered all questions, even deeply personal ones.

"After that, suddenly, he was no-one to be afraid of," Mrs. Splawn recalled.

No-one in the class knew that Andrew could make sounds until he laughed one day at one of Mrs. Splawn's puns. From that moment on, making Andrew happy became a priority for several students.

"I like people to be happy," said senior Matt Geiger, a six-foot-ten-inch basketball player who became Andrew's friend. "And Andrew loves people. He loves to laugh. Now I see him as just another kid sitting in a chair in school ... only his chair has wheels."

Senior Ann Carollo, who moved to Clearwater from California this year, became another close friend. She has gone to the movies with Andrew twice and goes to his house to help him with homework. Like several other students in the speech class, she knows Andrew so well that she can tell what he wants to say long before he has finished spelling out the words on his word board.

Some students said their friendship with Andrew has changed their attitude toward handicapped people and in some ways changed their lives.

"He wants to be a normal teenager and can't," Ann said. "It made me realize how grateful I should be."

"I used to get depressed about things and dwell on it," said Kelli Blaisdell. "Now I realize all the things I have going for me."

Several of the students are considering careers that would enable them to work with handicapped people, Mrs. Splawn said. She has seen all of her students bloom into more caring, happy people, she said, and Andrew isn't silent anymore.

"There was such sadness on Andrew's face when he first came. Now he's alive when he comes in this class," Mrs. Splawn said. "He seemed small and dejected. Now he's full of life and laughter. The rewards have been great."

* * *

I am happier now that I have made friends. It shows we have to keep working to be able to communicate.□

Andrew Murphy
3278 Masters Drive
Clearwater, Florida 33519, U.S.A.

Editor's Note:

The article quoted in Andrew's story first appeared in the *St. Petersburg Times*, Clearwater Edition, Sunday, November 23, 1986. It is reprinted here with permission of the publisher.

ESCI Trainee Receives Award



Last December, John Dowling was the proud recipient of a Community Action Award, presented by the Ontario Ministry for Disabled Persons.

This new award honours disabled Ontarians who have made significant contributions to the community or province as a whole. Mr. Dowling was one of six recipients selected from over one hundred nominees.

Mr. Dowling, now twenty-three years old, was one of the original group of Blissymbol users in 1971. He now uses speech for interpersonal communication and an IBM personal computer for written communication. He is presently enrolled in the Microprocessor Applications Training Program of the Ontario March of Dimes and has a half-time placement with the Easter Seal Communication Institute (ESCI).

His duties with ESCI involve assisting in the administration of CONFER, a teleconferencing system.

During the past two years Mr. Dowling has given many presentations to educators and to community groups. He has worked alongside and received valuable training from Murray Spence, educator and lecturer.

The awards ceremony was held December 11, 1986 in the Legislative Dining Room of the Ontario Legislature. President Ronald McInnes of the Ontario Advisory Council on the Physically Handicapped spoke and introduced Tony Ruprecht, Minister Responsible for Disabled Persons, who presented the awards. A reception attended by family, friends and colleagues followed the ceremony. Congratulations to John. And much future success!□

This section of
Communicating Together
is sponsored by
Pilot Club International,
Ontario District.

AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION

Developing Direct Selection

IRIS FISHMAN

Iris Fishman, M.A., CCC, is a speech pathologist who has worked in augmentative communication for the past ten years. She has directed two augmentative communication programs and is currently a consultant to United Cerebral Palsy Association of Fairfield County in Connecticut. She has just finished writing a book, Electronic Communication Aids: Selection and Use, published by College-Hill Press.

Because direct selection is the most rapid and simple selection technique, it is the most desirable for communication aid users. Unfortunately, directly selecting items is often viewed as an ability that a person does or does not have. If, after an individual has been optimally positioned, he or she appears to be unable to directly select items,

the technique is often quickly abandoned.

However, an individual who is initially unable to directly select may gradually develop the ability to do so. Severely physically disabled persons with limited upper extremity or head control may never have used these body parts in any purposeful manner. When given the opportunity to use them functionally and consistently, they may eventually develop direct selection abilities.

Jennifer Learns Direct Selection

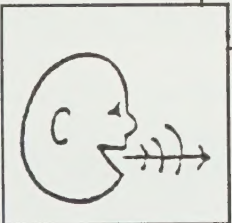
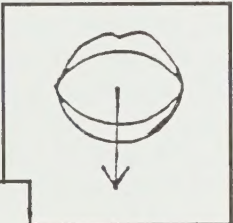
Take Jennifer for example. She is a seven-year-old severely speech impaired child with cerebral palsy who communicated through vocalization, responding to yes or no questions through head movements, eye pointing and facial expression. Severe athetoid movements of the upper extremities appeared to prevent her from using her arms and

hands for any functional activity.

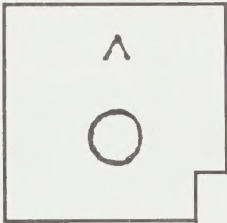
Initially, it was hoped that she would be able to use the *Viewpoint Optical Indicator* manufactured by Prentke Romich, a light beam worn on the head, to directly select items from a communication board. By moving her head, she could direct the light to shine on desired target areas.

Because her pointing was not very accurate and her range was limited, Jennifer could not use the light beam to indicate a sufficient number of items for conversation. However, she could use it to request objects by pointing to them, to attract the attention of others by shining a light at their face, or to respond and participate in certain classroom activities where there were only a limited number of items from which to select. For example, Jennifer used the light beam each morning in her class during opening activity to indicate the day's weather from a choice of four pictures.

For conversation, a selection



**ESCI**
Easter Seal Communication Institute
presents a seminar on
GRAPHICS IN
AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION
April 27, 1987



With Presentors:

Faith Carlson
George Karlan

Ellen Kravitz
Gail Van Tatenhove

Geb Verburg
William Yovetich

Co-ordinator:

Shirley McNaughton

Join this experienced group of professionals as they examine graphics and the manner in which individuals learn them

To register contact: Training Co-ordinator, Easter Seal Communication Institute
24 Ferrand Drive, Don Mills, Ontario, Canada M3C 3N2
Phone (416) 421-8377

Fee: \$55

• Watch in the next issue for details of the Second Seminar on Graphics to be held at the Easter Seal Communication Institute (ESCI), August 21, 1987 - to look at graphic materials that are commercially available.

display was attached to the front of Jennifer's lapboard. She indicated the general position of the desired item on this display through eye gaze. Her partner then scanned each item until Jennifer indicated her selection. When she was wearing the light beam, she could attempt to point directly to items or at least indicate their general position. In this way, she could practice using the light beam but not be pressured to do so.

In addition, three frequently used messages were placed on her lapboard, spaced apart far enough so that Jennifer could directly indicate them with her eyes. These were accessible to her even if her eye gaze board or light beam were not available. The messages were:

- 1) I want to go to the bathroom
- 2) I want to go on the floor
- 3) Take the light beam off.

Building the Lapboard Vocabulary

Soon after the messages were placed on her board, an unexpected event occurred. Jennifer began to point accurately to the message on the right with her right hand, to the one on the left with her left hand and to the one in the middle with either hand. When this was observed, other messages were then added gradually to the lapboard (Figure 1). Although Jennifer was able to use both hands to point, she became more accurate with the right than

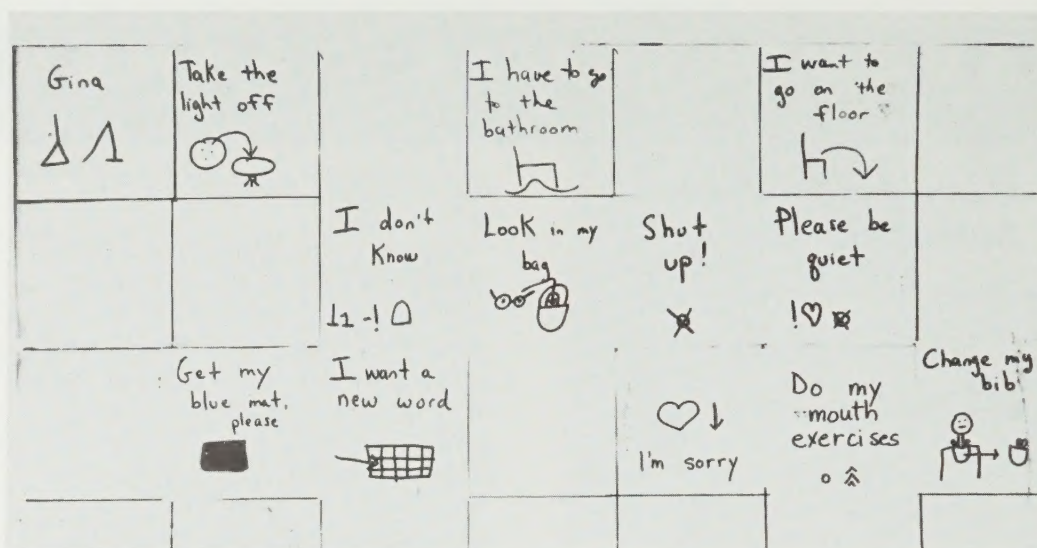


Figure 1

with the left, so messages on the right were placed in smaller target areas, allowing more of them to be displayed, while messages on the left were larger. As she developed the ability to point to more and more messages, the eye gaze system and the light beam were gradually faded out.

When Jennifer's pointing was not entirely accurate (she sometimes pointed to several adjacent target areas at once), she was encouraged to be more accurate (but not pressured to do so). If her message was unclear, her partner would name each item Jennifer had pointed to until she indicated the one she wanted. Often, the partner could guess what the message was by knowing the topic of the conversation. Eventually, this point-and-scan

technique was rarely used because Jennifer's selections became more accurate. She soon was able to use a board displaying over 200 items (Figure 2) as well as a direct selection electronic aid.

Developing the ability to direct select as Jennifer did is not uncommon, especially in children. Initially, children can be given a means of indicating items that requires the least effort and is most accurate, usually through scanning or some type of encoding system. In addition, they can be given the opportunity to use direct selection. In this way, children are able to practise direct selection within a functional and motivating situation, while not being pressured to do so because other means of selection can be used to accomplish their intended purpose. □



Figure 2

ASHA Helpline

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) is offering an information service to professionals and consumers in the area of augmentative communication as part of its federally funded project entitled "Implementation Strategies for Improving the Use of Communication Aids in Educational Settings." Professionals in the United States may contact the Information Resource Centre (800-638-6868). US consumers are asked to call the NASHA HELPLINE (800-638-8255).

ISAAC News

1987 promises to bring a strong non-North American contribution to the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC). Since the inception of ISAAC in May, 1983, non-North American professionals have held only "elect" positions within the executive committee. Now they will have primary responsibility for several offices. The new president is Gunnar Fagerberg of Sweden and the new secretary-treasurer is Karoly Galyas, also from Sweden. Both these men have been involved in rehabilitation and augmentative communication for many years and have much experience participating internationally. As well, the executive includes Andre Sylvestre from France as vice-president, International Concerns and Clive Thursfield from the United Kingdom as vice-president, Conventions and Scientific Meetings.

The North American members of the executive committee number five: Penny Parnes from Toronto as president-elect; Barry Romich from Ohio as secretary-treasurer-elect; Peter Lindsay from Toronto as vice-president, Publications; Caroline Musselwhite, North Carolina as vice-president, Advocacy; Shirley McNaughton, Toronto as past president.

During the two-year term of office (1987-88) when the executive committee has stronger representation from outside North America, ISAAC's Biennial Conference will be back this side of the Atlantic. Planning is well underway for the 1988 Conference, to be held October 23 - 26, 1988, at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim, California. Biennial Conference Chairman, Dr. Frank De Ruyter, and his conference committee have already made extensive arrangements. This promises to be a real family affair with lots of Disneyland fun for children and spouses in addition to the conference stimulation for those involved in augmentative communication. We can look forward to another exciting first as ISAAC's Biennial Conference moves from

castles (Cardiff Conference, Sept., 1986) to Mickey Mouse and friends. Start saving now and watch for further information in upcoming issues of *Communicating Together*. □

Join ISAAC Now

The International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) offers four types of memberships:

- Student Membership
- Active Membership
- Contributing Membership
- Corporate Membership

Members of ISAAC are entitled to reduced rates for: *Communicating Together*, *Communication Outlook*, *Augmentative and Alternative Communication* (AAC journal)

For membership application and other information about ISAAC write ISAAC, P.O. Box 1762, Station R, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M4G 4A3.

Communication In Italy

ELIZABETH INGRASSIA

Elizabeth Ingrassia is a twenty-year-old nonspeaking young woman. She studied at the Bosisio Parini Institute in Milan for eight years. She can type using a headstick but finds this system very tiring. Last year she was introduced to Blissymbols, and has found it to be a useful complementary system of communication. Ms. Ingrassia dictated the above letter to a friend by indicating the symbols on her display.

When I was small, I communicated with my eyes and only my mother understood me. When I was six years old, I entered Bosisio, a residential centre for handicapped children, administered by the "La Nostra Famiglia". I found no one understood what I said. It made me feel awful. My communication time was slow and the people who were with me became impatient. I made

associations in order to communicate. First of all I looked at a person or a thing, then they asked me general questions about what I had to say. It wasn't easy.

Most of the time when I was with my friends at Bosisio, we understood each other well. If they didn't understand me, I used the alphabet the way my mother taught me. The people that didn't know me believed that I was stupid because I didn't speak, and that bothered me a lot, especially when they pitied me.

Some time ago I moved to the country and entered Carro, a residence run by a group of young volunteers. Only one person there understood me, or at least tried to understand me. It was Claudio. He understood how I expressed myself with my eyes. For a certain period of time, the people at Carro couldn't manage to understand me and I couldn't explain to them how to help me. I began typing letters, to allow them to get to know me. After a while, we managed to talk, but we need a lot of time.

Now with Blissymbols, I can speak better with people who don't know me. □



Elizabeth Ingrassia using her symbol board to talk to a friend.

This section of *Communicating Together* is sponsored by Pilot Club International, Ontario District.

Communicating with the Pocket Speech Aid

DAVID KEATING

David Keating is employed as a Physicist at the West of Scotland Health Board's Department of Clinical Physics & Bio-Engineering. For the past three years he has been a member of a small multidisciplinary team involved in the development of a range of synthetic speech aids for use by patients with acquired speech loss.

The Pocket Speech Aid is a small, hand-held communicator with high quality natural sounding speech output. The device can have a male or female voice with a local accent and dialect. Users are not embarrassed by the "voice" of the device. The device can be used in many different situations. One example is given here.

Margaret's Conversation.

Margaret is fifty-six years of age and is in hospital recovering from a recent stroke. She is unable to speak but uses many other forms of communication such as gesturing, facial expression and an alphabet board. Recently she was given a Pocket Speech Aid to help her gain attention and direct a conversation. The following conversation illustrates how the Pocket Speech Aid can be used to steer the direction of a conversation.

Margaret was sitting by her bed when her twenty-three-year-old daughter, Susan, came in to visit her.

Margaret: *Gestures Hi*

Susan: Hi Mum, can you be bothered with a visitor?

Margaret: YES, PLEASE TALK

Susan: I brought this book for you.

Margaret: THANKS, THAT'S A GOOD IDEA

Susan: How are you feeling since ...

Margaret: HOLD ON ... I WANT TO ASK A QUESTION.
Margaret uses the speech aid to interrupt her daughter. She then proceeds to use her alphabet board to spell

the word "exam".

Susan tells her mother about her recent exam and then talks about her new apartment.

Susan: Our new apartment has a large bathroom and John is thinking about fitting a jacuzzi ...

Margaret: HOLD ON ... CAN YOU EXPLAIN
Susan explains what a jacuzzi is and continues to talk about her apartment.

Margaret: HOLD ON ... SHALL WE TALK ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE?
Margaret interrupts her daughter and gestures for her glasses.

Suan: Do you want me to bring your glasses?

Margaret: NO, I'D PREFER SOMETHING ELSE
She uses her alphabet board to spell the word "dad", and gestures for her glasses again.

Susan: Oh, you want dad to bring your glasses tonight?

Margaret: YES, HOLD ON.
Margaret points to the book.

Susan: Do you want to keep the book?

Margaret: YES
She gestures and points to the book.

Susan: Is it your reading glasses you want?

Margaret: YES THANKS, THAT'S A GOOD IDEA

Phrases Used with Pocket Speech Aid.

Margaret used most of the following phrases that were preprogrammed in her conversation prompter:

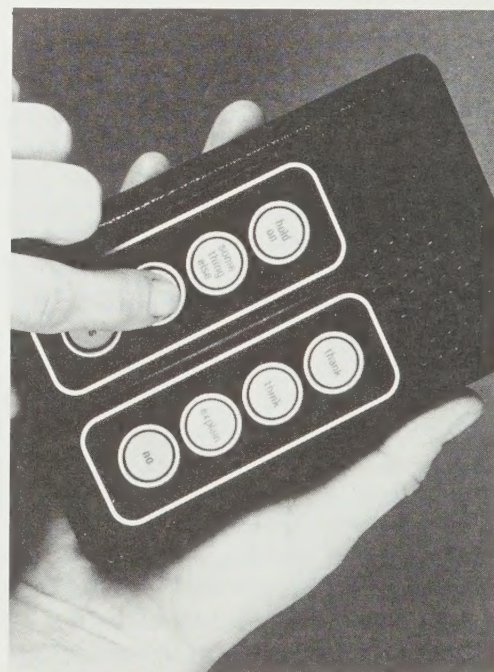
1. Hold on, this machine helps.
2. Shall we talk about something else?
3. I want to ask a question.
4. Yes, please talk.
5. Thanks, that's a good idea.
6. I'd like to think about it.
7. Can you explain?
8. No, I'd prefer something else.

Although Margaret only used some of these phrases in this particular conversation, she does find

all of them useful in situations to help her convey different intentions. She does not have to "speak" the whole phrase but can output part of a phrase simply by releasing the appropriate button at the correct time. It is important to be able to maintain eye contact with your communication partner; Margaret is able to do so as she does not have to look at the device when she is operating it. She enjoys using the Pocket Speech Aid and finds it a useful supplement to her gesturing abilities. When she leaves hospital she intends to use the device as a telephone aid. This is possible by changing the vocabulary cartridge.

We have many clients who benefit from using the Pocket Speech Aid. It can be used as a conversation prompter, as a telephone aid or as a specific situation aid. We have found the device useful in many different situations: at home, in a car and in a hospital ward.

The Pocket Speech Aid was developed by the West of Scotland Health Board's Department of Clinical Physics and Bio-Engineering and will be commercially available early in 1987. The price of the device is expected to be approximately £200 (about \$400 Cdn.). □



The Pocket Speech Aid

Editor's Note:

As our experience with augmentative communication systems grows, it is becoming more apparent that a range of components are needed within each person's total system. The above article is an example of a new device, that by itself is limited to eight phrases per cartridge, but when used along with other techniques, within a total communication system, contributes to effective participation in a conversation.

For information about the Pocket Speech Aid contact: Nuclear Medical Electronics Systems and Services Ltd., 2 Hutton Square, Brucefield Park, Livingston, West Lothian. EH54 9BX, Scotland, U.K.

The Power of the Modem

JIM PETRONE

Jim Petrone, is a student at Meeting Street School, in East Providence, Rhode Island. He is a former Blissymbol user who moved to a sight word communication board and now uses a Vois 130 for expressive communication. Mr. Petrone is still learning better reading and spelling skills. He has at home an Apple II+ computer with printer (obtained through a National Easter Seal Society — Apple Computer grant program) and a Hayes modem (donated by Hayes Microcomputer Products).

My name is Jim Petrone. Thanks to Meeting School I have an Apple computer with a modem which I use to talk to my friends. I especially like to talk to my girlfriend Becca. It is a great idea.

When Becca is not around, I call The Source. The Source is a network of computers that has a lot of information. On the Source I can call up and find out the latest sports scores — especially my favorite team the Boston Celtics.

I am a meteorologist. I love to use The Source to find out the weather all around the U.S.A. and the world.

In my spare time I like to call down some games. My favorites are Solitaire and advanced Blackjack. I try to beat Diane, my opponent, in the Blackjack games.

Very soon my school is going to

set up a bulletin board. Then I will be able to talk to my friends all over Rhode Island. I really love the world of communicating with my Apple computer. □

Good News for North America — From Sweden

Multi-Talk Communication Aid

Multi-Talk is becoming available in North America. In recent months Karoly Galyas from Stockholm, Sweden has been demonstrating this high quality speech output aid at Conferences and Centres in Canada, USA and the United Kingdom. And now as a personal undertaking, Larry Weiss of Zygo Industries Inc. is providing information regarding Multi-Talk to interested persons in the United States and Canada.

Multi-Talk is a multi-lingual, multi-mode communication aid with both speech and written output capacity. It is battery operated and fits into a small carrying case which makes it fully portable. Multi-Talk can speak nine languages, including Swedish and English. It is produced in Sweden by Fonema. The price in the United States will be approximately \$6,000.00.

The synthesizer used in Multi-Talk is a result of thirty-five years of basic research and development at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm. The first experiments in using it for communication were in Sweden in 1978. Since 1982, several devices have been used and evaluated. The information from these experiences has influenced the types of operation modes provided, and has led to the inclusion of a large capacity of stored phrases and sentences.

Editors Note:

For information about Multi-Talk contact: Larry Weiss, Zygo Industries, Inc., P.O. Box 1008, Portland, OR 97207-1008, U.S.A.

The Easter Seal Communication Institute ESCI

New Name for BCI

We are happy to announce that the Blissymbolics Communication Institute has a new name:

Within ESCI, there are two major programs.

The first will maintain responsibility for the development and international standards of Blissymbolics with the new name Blissymbolics Communication International (BCI).

The second will continue the educational support service, originally called Augmentative and Alternative Communication with Education (AACE), and will be known through the Institute's name ESCI.

Through the contribution of both its Blissymbol activities and its Ontario educational service, the Easter Seal Communication Institute will work toward the objectives that have guided the Blissymbolics Communication Institute's work for many years.

We are undertaking this name change to emphasize our close working relationship with the Easter Seal Society, Ontario, and to recognize the support the Society has given to our work over the past decade. We look forward to many productive years, working with and for augmentative communicators with our new name and from our new location with The Easter Seal Society.

**The Easter Seal
Communication Institute
24 Ferrand Drive
Don Mills, Ontario
M3C 3N2
Telephone: (416) 421-8377**

Blissymbols and Gifted Children

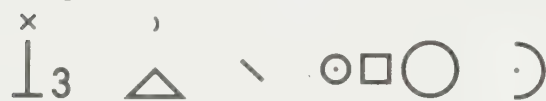
Blissymbolics has long been recognized by professionals in the field of augmentative communication as a means to enhance the communication of nonspeaking persons. Special educators familiar with the system have used the meaning based graphic symbols to teach their students basic language concepts. Recently an elementary teacher, intrigued by the language enrichment possibilities of the symbols, completed an exciting project with his class of gifted students. Mr. Gerry Meuris and the "Thriving on Challenge" class from the Terry Fox School in Pierrefonds, Quebec, have published a book entitled *Three Blissymbol Stories*. Classmates worked together to write and illustrate some delightful stories which they then translated into Blissymbols and printed using the *Talking Blissapple* computer program.

Students learned many things while working on the project from October to May of last year. In studying the history and application of Blissymbolics, they learned about people who experience communication difficulties. They then became motivated to create something they could share with nonspeaking children which led to the idea for the book. The computer played a major role in the production of their book. Students familiarized themselves with the *Talking Blissapple* program and even learned to use the editing features to perform functions such as changing verb tenses or modifying the words which accompany the symbols.

The following excerpt is from the story, "The Girl Without a Smile".

To obtain a free copy of the book, write to:
Mr. Gerry Meuris, Terry Fox School,
132 Huntington, Pierrefonds, Quebec
H8Z 1G2.

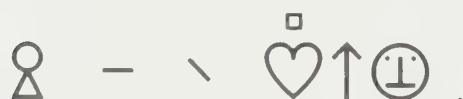
They made a circle around



her and sang



"GIRL WITHOUT A SMILE



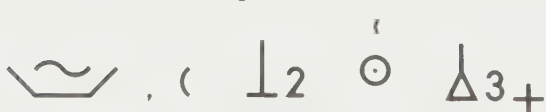
cries all the while.



Put her in a pot of



soup, then you'll see her



PIG - TAILS DROOP."

(woven hair) (fall)



Editors Note:

In the above excerpt, to reflect student creativity, some symbols have been reproduced as submitted, in a form not consistent with *Blissymbols for Use*.



Blissymbolics is a meaning-based, augmentative communication system offering vocabulary, structure and strategies to stimulate communication and cognitive development. It can benefit persons of all age and intellectual levels who have the potential and opportunity for interactive, functional communication. Blissymbolics can be used independently, with a variety of picture systems and technologies, or as a complement to words and spelling.

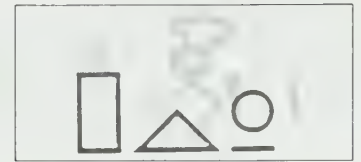
Blissymbols used herein are derived from the symbols described in the work *Semantography*, original copyright © C. K. Bliss, 1949.

September 1982, C. K. Bliss granted an exclusive, non-cancellable and perpetual, world-wide license to the Blissymbolics Communication Institute, for the application of Blissymbols, for use by handicapped persons and persons having communication, language and learning difficulties.

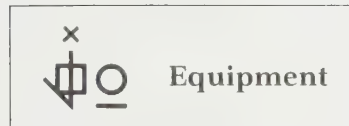
The symbol composition and drawings appearing in articles are in accordance with *Blissymbols for Use*, compiled and edited by Barbara Hehner, and published by the Blissymbolics Communication Institute, Toronto, 1980.

A Blissymbol Recipe for a Yogurt Dessert

Symbol users and parents wrote to say they enjoyed the Blissymbol recipe for apple crisp which was published in *Communicating Together* (Vol. 3, No. 3). Below is another "family favourite" for a delicious yogurt pudding.



~ water +∅↑ sugar ∴:K^K gelatin (powder + to thicken)
 +∅ "vanilla" flavouring ∅, ∅⊙ yogurt (plain) K^K ∅⊙! thick cream (whipping)



∅ "teaspoon" ∅ "measuring" cup ∅ pan
 ∅ bowl ∅ ∅⊙ ∅ mould (1 quart) (container + shape)

Combine 4 teaspoons gelatin with 1/2 cup cold water . Wait ten minutes .
 ∅ 4 ∅ ∴:K^K ++ 1/2 ∅ 1<?> ~ ∅ 10 ∅

In a pan combine 1 1/2 cups "whipping" cream with 1/2 cup sugar.
 ∅ \ ∅ ∅ 1 1/2 ∅ K^K ∅⊙! ++ 1/2 ∅ +∅↑

Cook over "moderate" 5 minutes . Combine mixture with gelatin.
 ∅ ∅ ∅ 5 ∅ ∅ ∅ ∴:K^K

"Stir" "until" gelatin "dissolves" . "Cool" 5 minutes . Combine mixture with
 ∅ ∅ ∴:K^K ∅⊙ 1<?> 5 ∅ ∅ ∅ ++

2 1/4 cups yogurt and 1 teaspoon "vanilla" . Put dessert into mould
 2 1/4 ∅ ∅, ∅⊙ + 1 ∅ +∅ ∅ ∅ ∅ ∅ ∅ ∅⊙

and "chill" 4 hours . Empty mould eat with fruit sauce .
 + 1<?> 4 ∅ 1 ∅ ∅ ∅ ∅ ++ ∅ ∅ ~

Note: words appearing in quotation marks vary slightly from those generally associated with the symbols.

THE PARAPHRASE

ANN RUNNING AND CATHY FAIRLEY

The Paraphrase is written for those who are nonspeaking and who are moving into traditional orthography. It offers an independent reading opportunity for the growing reader. This Paraphrase is written by Ann Running, an augmentative communicator who began communicating with Blissymbols and now uses a Light Talker. She was assisted in the selection and preparation of this article by Cathy Fairley, Consultant, Easter Seal Communication Institute.

My First Panel Meeting

Often, older nonspeaking students speak to groups of teachers and other professionals. Sarah Brothers tells about an exciting experience:

I went to a special meeting about Blissymbols. It brought important people together. They were from Canada and the United States. I was excited to be there too.

They had a job to do. They helped me to make up new symbols. They really listened to me. They liked my ideas.

It was lots of fun. I learned a lot.

About the Writer:

Sarah Brothers is 17 years old. She lives in Orlando, Florida. She uses a word board and Express II to communicate.

To Readers of Paraphrase

Sarah's original story was printed in *Communicating Together*, Vol. 4, No. 3, September 1986.



Sarah Brothers enjoys a pool side reception.

An Interview with Mary Stacey

SHIRLEY McNAUGHTON



Mary Stacey is Co-ordinator of "Special Needs Communication," a post-diploma certificate program initiated in September, 1986, at Sheridan College (Brampton Campus). She has worked as a faculty member at Sheridan College and as an Adult Protective Service Worker (APSW) for the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services. Her varied personal experiences in working with clients with special communication needs now contribute to the training of front-line staff. The following interview reveals some of the rationale and aspirations for "Special Needs Communication".

Communicating Together

When did you first become interested in augmentative communication?

Stacey

In 1979, I was asked to establish a residential program for hearing impaired, mentally retarded adults who had been institutionalized for anywhere from twenty to forty years. This was in London, Ontario, for the London Association for the Mentally Retarded. In Ontario at that time, the area of hearing assessments for individuals diagnosed as developmentally delayed was receiving attention. As well, many clients who had originally been placed in institutions were found eligible for community living. A new government policy of de-institutionalization made it possible to fund small

group residential settings. We were given the opportunity to open a program for eight adults, seven of whom were nonspeaking. Their complex needs made me aware of how much we had to learn about communication.

It was a tremendous challenge to have individuals with a wide range of abilities living together. The residents included persons diagnosed as functioning at the profound and at the mild levels of retardation. Some had very limited functional communication; others were capable of complex systems of manual signs and gestures.

Communicating Together

What made you think about developing a training program?

Stacey

When working as an Adult Protective Social Worker (APSW), I recognized the need for front line workers to be able to communicate with their clients. Clients in group homes, vocational programs, pre-schools and classrooms were functioning at lower levels than previously, and disabled individuals were experiencing more complex needs. Staff were often placed in the position of having to develop strategies with limited formal preparation.

As an APSW, I was familiar with many programs, all of which had staff who could benefit from communication training. As a part-time instructor at Sheridan College, I saw this as a natural setting in which this training could take place.

I initially thought that this training could be incorporated into the sign language interpreter program. As it evolved, it seemed better to create an independent program. Russell Schmidt, Associate Dean of Applied Arts, and I worked together on its development with the intention of turning the program over to the Continuing Education Division after it received approval. We wanted to ensure that it would be available to front-line staff. We followed the standard procedures for developing any program. This involved establishing an advisory committee that included members of the social

service community and professionals involved in the field of augmentative communication. As well, a market survey was sent to 200 agencies to determine need for the proposed program. A curriculum sub-committee was formed to determine the content of the eight courses that make up the program.

I was pleased that market research supported my personal experience. There were many front line workers, teachers and parents struggling to assist their disabled clients/relatives achieve functional communication on a daily basis. The market survey revealed that agencies and school boards were recognizing that developmental service workers, early childhood educators, teacher aides and teachers would welcome a program providing skill development and job enrichment in alternative and augmentative communication.

Following approval by the advisory committee and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, the program was put into place in September, 1986. A permanent advisory committee will now oversee the future development of the program. The committee meets twice a year and is responsible for curriculum development, enrollment, promotion and evaluation.

Communicating Together

Tell me about the current program?

Stacey

We feel it is important to have a balance between the practical and theoretical courses. We provide students with a basic introduction to several areas of exceptionality, the language acquisition process and the role of the various professionals involved with persons with communication disorders. The practical courses focus upon manual systems, symbol systems and aids and adaptations. An important component is providing students with the opportunity to observe ongoing communication programs.

Communicating Together

Who has enrolled in this program?

Stacey

For the most part we have front-line workers — teacher aides and developmental counsellors. We also have been pleased that some of the professionals specializing in augmentative communication have enrolled in the practical courses. We now have twenty students enrolled in the program.

Communicating Together

What difference do you think this course will make to the direct care staff who graduate?

Stacey

The majority of our students are employed and plan to continue in their same roles. However, they will function more effectively as members of a multidisciplinary team, able to make relevant observations and appropriate referrals to speech pathologists and assessment programs. They will be aware of community resources, and able to

communicate more effectively with their clients.

Communicating Together

How do you think this course will affect clients?

Stacey

Clients are, after all the bottom line. We need to work together to identify the boundaries of our roles, and to develop richer, more rewarding lives for our clients. We owe it to them to provide staff who are as knowledgeable and capable as possible. □

Editors Note:

For information on "Special Needs Communication" certificate program, contact: Mary Stacey, Co-ordinator, Special Needs Communication Program, Continuing Education, Sheridan College, McLaughlin Rd., Brampton, Ontario L6V 1G6.

COMMUNICATION OUTLOOK

Focusing on Communication Aids and Techniques

A Publication of the International Society for

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC)

Communication Outlook is an international quarterly which provides a forum for individuals interested in the application of techniques and aids for people who experience communication handicaps. It is a cross-disciplinary information source as well as a reference for those wishing to contact others working in the field of communication enhancement.

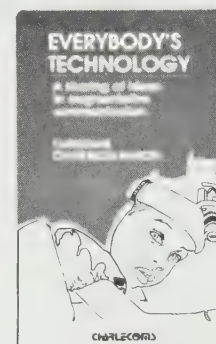
Communication Outlook features regular sections on: commercially available aids, aids under development and components to build aids; interfacing and augmenting aids; new publications and resources; centers and groups involved in various aspects of communication enhancement; innovative methods, procedures, teaching strategies and uses of materials shared by readers; and advocacy issues, including new groups, strategies and successes.

For subscription information, contact *Communication Outlook*, Artificial Language Laboratory, 405 Computer Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 48824-1042, (517) 353-0870.

Have You Moved?

Please remember to let us know your new address. If possible send an address label from a past issue.

Mail to: **Communicating Together**
24 Ferrand Drive,
Don Mills, Ontario, Canada
M3C 3N2



**NEW
BOOK**

EVERYBODY'S TECHNOLOGY

**A Sharing of Ideas in
Augmentative Communication**

by CHRISTIANE CHARLEBOIS-MAROIS, B.Sc. O.T.

More than 150 descriptions and illustrations of simple technical aids which help non-speaking people to communicate more effectively. These ideas were collected by the author from 40 centres mainly in Canada, United States and Sweden.

This book covers :

**Portable Systems
Laptrays
Accessing Tools
Encoding Techniques
Simple Commercial Material
and Products
Readiness Skills for
Communication**

In addition, you will find detailed lists of resources :

- Periodicals, books and articles related to adapted material and augmentative communication;
- List of distributors / suppliers ...

TO ORDER, SEND

(from Canada) \$19.50 Cdn
(from United States) \$16.00 U.S.
(from Overseas) \$17.00 U.S.
- Postage and Handling included -

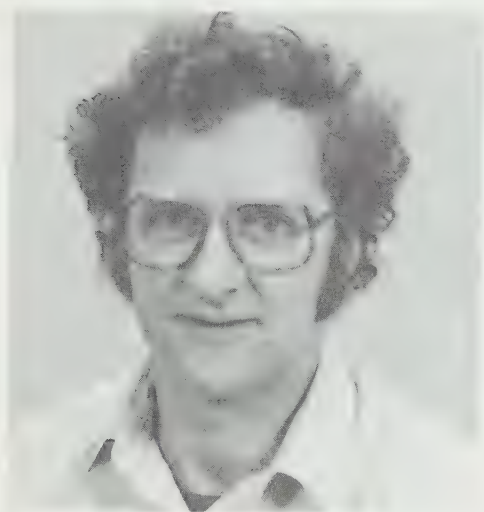
or a purchase order to :

CHARLECOMS ENR.

P.O. Box 419
Jean-Talon Station
Montreal, Quebec
CANADA
H1S 2Z3

A Wholistic Approach

GEB VERBURG



"Research and Publications" is written by Geb Verburg, who has been involved in the field of nonspeech communication since the mid-seventies. A cognitive scientist, Mr. Verburg is currently working as Research Associate in several projects at the Hugh MacMillan Medical Centre.

In my last column I wrote about the large number of variables that (may) affect augmentative communication. In this article I would like to look at one part of augmentative communication, namely the process of learning symbols, and apply a simple but I hope effective wholistic model to this process.

There are many kinds and many versions of wholism. The one I will write about attempts to look at a person-environment system. One type of such system involves a person who is learning symbols or signs. Instead of looking at this person as separate from his/her communication device, and separate from his/her sign-symbol system and separate again from the intention, message, audience, and purpose of the communication, I want to look at all these different bits and pieces as one dynamic goal-directed system. That is much more easily said than done. The peculiar thing about the differentiation of our world into many separate parts and factors is that this differentiation is entirely due to the way in which our minds

work. Our minds are like insatiable splitters. They (I mean we) divide our world into "self" and "other", "subject" and "object", "figure" and "ground", "speaker" and "listener" and so on. There is a system to this compulsory splitting process, and although I will not go into this here, I will use some of the principles to propose a way of looking at a symbol learning situation as a dynamic whole.

The Symbol Learning Process

Symbol learning is part of the process of "world building" or part of what Piaget called "the construction of reality". We tend to forget that this expression 'construction of reality' is meant very literally. Every act of learning does two things simultaneously. It creates in the child some form of temporary or permanent representation or memory of the thing learned, but at the same time the world-for-the-child changes so that now the world, as the child sees and knows it, contains the thing learned in a new, more controllable, way.

This learning process starts long before the child learns the first word or symbol. At first the baby must learn that people and things exist. Very early in a child's life things exist for the child only when the child is in direct contact with the thing either visually or auditorily or by touching the object (with the mouth or hand). Without such direct contact things (and people) do not exist for the child.

Gradually these direct contacts can be abandoned, first for a few, then for more and more; things continue to exist for the child even when they disappear out of sight. This is called "object permanence".

The Child's Internal and External World

Object permanence — the continued existence of things (people, and events) even though the child does not see, touch or hear them anymore — has a parallel in the child's mind. The internal representations (or memories) of things are now sufficiently stable to persist

independently of the physical objects they represent in, as yet, a pre or nonlinguistic form. It is important to keep in mind this built-in duality of learning through the construction of internal representations which parallel the external world for the child. Most important for us to realize is that these internal and external worlds are worlds-for-the-child and not necessarily worlds as adults represent and construct them. The richer these two worlds are, the easier it is to add to them and to create new events and experiences with the worlds. Thus the more fully and diversely things are represented in the child's mind and the more elaborate the child's external world, the greater can be the child's learning. The more a child knows about how things look, feel, smell, sound, what they do or can be used for, where they can be found, etc., the more readily the child adds names, symbols and rules to his/her internal and external worlds. Once again, the richness of the internal and external world must be a richness of and for the child. An enriched environment, no matter how carefully orchestrated by a teacher or parent, is only effective if the child can explore and experiment with that environment and build a network of internal representations for it.

Symbolization

Once the two worlds are differentiated and stabilized for the child, it becomes possible to learn names or symbols. Although an instructor can introduce symbols before a non-linguistic internal representation is formed and before the symbolized thing is included in the child's external world, it is a laborious route.

Figure 1 shows in a very simple form the two worlds and the way in which symbolizations (words, signs, or symbols) tie in to this whole.

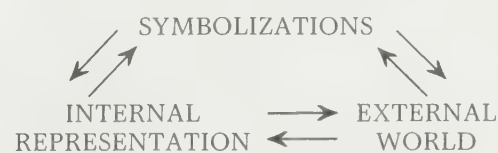


Figure 1

Symbols have links to both the world of internal representations and to the world of things, events, etc., as constructed by the child. The double arrows indicate that many reciprocal relations exist between the three units. These units cannot exist in isolation. An internal representation that is not linked to something in the child's world (real or imagined) is like static on a telephone line. External things or events that are not incorporated in the child's construction of reality do not exist for the child (although they may be very real for us as adults). And symbols that are not tied to the child's world or to his/her internal representations are meaningless and unusable.

So far, I have focused on a wholistic view of the symbol learning situation. The diagram could be fitted into a topological model (Elementary Catastrophe Theory) which would also provide a graphic illustration of the dynamic system as a whole. The main points to remember, however, are that there are three identifiable components to the symbol learning process; that these components are

very closely linked and that each component needs and supports the other.

Teaching can be profitably directed at each of these components and the following considerations may help:

Internal representations are initially largely non-linguistic and even after language or symbols are acquired the sensory, olfactory, motor, spatio-temporal components remain available.

Symbol learners do not deliberately set out to construct a new addition to their internal or external world, nor do we. The process of world building takes place in the course of normal living and learning activities. This wholistic model allows us as teachers or facilitators to analyze and assess a student's performance and to give direction to our teaching and intervention. If, for example, a symbol user only uses a symbol when its referent (the thing that it represents) can be seen, never in its absence, then we know that there is a weak link. We can assess whether the weakness is in the symbol, the child's internal world or in the child's opportunity to acquire knowledge of the external world.

We can then either make the symbol more meaningful through the graphic information we provide or introduce discussion, reading or expressive experiences that will contribute to assimilation of the symbol and modification of the internal and external worlds. Problems can be assessed and their treatment tailored to what appears to be the weak link or the component that needs strengthening.

The external world of the child will more and more approximate the world that we — as adults — know, but even for us it remains our constructed world. To have the opportunity to explore and experiment, and thereby construct this external world is crucial to the elaboration of the child's internal world as well as his/her external world. Symbols are tools that give us access to both our worlds at once. They represent only a fraction of each world but allow us to share those worlds with other people and in doing so build, change, and learn. □

The Versatile Aid DIAL SCAN

For people who use switches

Use the **Dial Scan** to communicate with pictures, photographs, symbol systems, and written sentences. The **Dial Scan** can adapt to the student's needs as his language ability improves.

Create overlays displaying curriculum worksheets and the **Dial Scan** becomes an educational aid. This tool makes it possible for the physically handicapped to actively participate in the classroom.

So versatile - it serves as a communication aid and an education aid simply by changing overlays

Write for our catalog today!



don johnston
developmental
equipment

nonspeech
communication
and
computer access

900 winnetka terrace, lake zurich, illinois 60047 312/438-3476

Yes I Can Play — with Adaptive Toys

ANNE WARRICK



Last issue, Communicating Together published the first in a series of articles on toys called "Come Play with Me". The following is the second in the series. Mrs. Warrick is a speech pathologist with many years' experience working with children. She is the author of the book Blissymbols for Pre-School Children.

Toys can be described as tools which help children explore their world, develop physical and mental skills, and grow in the understanding of interpersonal relationships. Children with physical disabilities are challenged in their use of toys. They must play within the limits of their physical, sensory, and mental capabilities. Solitary play is often frustrating for them. Group play may be restricting for young partners. One-to-one play is often too time consuming for busy family members. As a result, children with special play needs frequently become "watchers" rather than "doers". They watch through the window as friends play outside; they watch in the kitchen as mom bakes; and they watch across the den as brothers and sisters play "dress up" and "doll house". There are books which reference therapeutic and programmed approaches to play for children with disabilities. This article is simply a sharing of ideas which have helped friends and families play together more easily.

It is possible to develop an eye for "special duty" toys. One looks

for durability so that favourite toys are not constantly broken when roughly handled or dropped on the floor. Toys which attract and hold a child's attention by virtue of movement, colour, texture, or sound, are good buys. Toys to which large knobs, handles, rings, or soft woollen balls can be added to make them more easily graspable soon catch one's eye, especially if they can be adapted and still remain attractive and usable for able bodied friends. Toy adaptations are as varied as the needs of their users. They are successful when those joining in the play can find creative solutions to the difficulties arising with certain types of toys. And "who has the time for this?" you ask. Often grandparents do!

Adaptations for Wheelchair Trays

Some general observations can be made about wheelchair play. Children who require specialized seating systems, to ensure upright positioning and increased functional hand skills, will have their play surfaces limited to a lap tray or table top. When a child's hands are poorly coordinated, the toys that he or she uses are continually falling off these surfaces. Ways to lessen the "drop off" factor should be considered. The lap tray can be measured, and a temporary raised edge made, which sits just inside the rim of the regular tray to form a kind of toy corral. Lap trays can be designed to accommodate a specific play activity. Some children may enjoy having a removable section of the tray cut so that a toy baby bath or cradle can be dropped into the play surface. This arrangement not only holds the bath in place, but also provides a steady, even surface for dolls clothes and baby care needs. Others may enjoy a lap tray with numerous boxes sunken into it for grouping their many "gobots". Toys can be attached to lap trays with short strings. This gives the child a way of retrieving toys which fall off the surface, and it also cuts down on breakages. Beware of too many toys being tied, as the strings become entangled creating a frustration in themselves. Attaching toys directly

to a child's hands by straps or strings should only be done when the playthings are very soft or pliable. It is critical to consider the possibility of self injury whenever play materials are being adapted for children with severe physical disabilities.

There are some commercially available products which make toys more manageable. *Dycem* is a double sided non-slip matting which can be placed on a lap tray or table to "hold" toys, paper, or play dishes in place as children play or eat. *Velcro* can also be used to lessen a child's frustration in play situations which call for fine motor skills. For example, a velcro carpet glued to the floor of a doll's house, with accompanying velcro strips attached to the under surfaces of furnishings, will allow children to become interior designers without all the small tables and chairs being continually overturned as a result of poor physical coordination. This idea can be used for any number of games in which toy stability and placement are factors. *Dycem* and *Velcro* provide stability, but they do not allow graded movement. Where this feature is needed, as in pushing along cars, trucks and fire engines, frustrating situations can often be decreased by using a cookie sheet as the play surface, and attaching the necessary amount of magnetic tape to the underside of the cars. The magnetic tape allows some friction when moving the cars and diggers along a fantasy highway and helps keep them upright and in their correct spaces when parked.

Adapted Toys Stimulate Creativity and Learning

When a child's frustration level is high, mom's tolerance is low, and household items are the only materials available, reach for the Saranwrap or Handiwrap. Wind some around a piece of strong cardboard, chopping board, or cookie sheet. Tear or cut up some small pieces of coloured meat trays or egg boxes, and have the child enjoy an independent art activity. The two materials adhere well and provide a good medium for making designs or pictures.

Toys provide an opportunity to learn about shapes, sizes, colours, textures and the function of objects. This is done via puzzles and games. It may be necessary to make additional boxes or borders around puzzles, when children have jerky hands. Such adaptations retain the puzzle pieces, (or the dominoes or bingo cards) within a given area, and lessen the chance of knocking one piece of the toy or game aside as the child places a second or third piece within the frame. Additional help for grasping puzzle pieces can be provided by replacing very small knobs with larger ones. This exchange is made on the basis of the space available on each piece of a puzzle, the child's physical capability, and the amount of puzzle picture still left visible. Don't let the puzzle end up as an arrangement of knobs! And remember, some children may even find small handles, which they can hook a finger under, easier to work with than a knob.

The wide range of battery operated toys available today, along with "switch" technology and resource books for the adaptation of toys, can enrich the play experience of children who are physically challenged. Most specialized children's centres can provide information about adapted battery operated toys. Race tracks, trains, space walkers and every type of robot can dance to a single switch in response to the touch of children. How to make this magic is referenced at the end of this article. It can easily be done by parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters and friends. And perhaps, one day, if time allows, the physically challenged child will participate in family baking. Instead of just seeing the ingredients on the counter, listening to mom talk about the way to make chocolate chip cookies, smelling and watching the lightly browned shapes come from the oven, the child can join in the action. Household mixers and blenders can be adapted to run off a single switch too, allowing everyone to have a more meaningful role in the kitchen.

Finally, for the quiet times, a "switch" for a tape recording machine allows independence in listening to audio books available at libraries. In addition, stories (maybe taped by grandpa?) can tell of the old times, and guide children

through the family photograph album. Books about "me and my friends" can be recorded to accompany classroom pictures. Children find homemade books fascinating. Woollen balls, or popsicle sticks attached to the pages, can help them turn from one page to another as they hear the taped stories.

Nothing really special — nothing really new — just a few ideas that may help "watchers" become "doers". □

References:

- Burkhart, L.J. (1980) *Homemade Battery Powered Toys and Educational Devices for Severely Handicapped Children*. Order from Linda J. Burkhart, 8303 Rhode Island Avenue, College Park, Maryland 20740, U.S.A.
- Burkhart, L.J. (1982) *More Handmade Battery Operated Devices for Severely Handicapped Children with Suggested Activities*. Order from Linda J. Burkhart, 8303 Rhode Island Avenue, College Park, Maryland 20740, U.S.A.
- Carlson, F. (1982) *Prattle and Play: Equipment Recipes for Non-Speech Communication*. Order from Media Resource Center, Meyer Children's Rehabilitation Institute, University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, Nebraska, 68131. U.S.A.
- Higgins, J. (1982) *Guidelines for Adapting Battery Operated Toys for the Physically Handicapped*. Order from California Avenue School, 215 West California Avenue, Vista, California.
- Musselwhite, C. Ramsey (1986) *Adaptive Play for Children with Special Needs*. College Hill Press, San Diego, California.
- Write, C. and M. Nomura. *From Toys to Computers*. Available from Christine Wright, P.O. Box 700242, San Jose, California 95170.

Products and Resources

- Dycem. J.A. Preston Co., 3220 Wharton Way, Mississauga, Ontario, L4X 2C1.
- Velcro. Hardware, Building & Sewing Supply Stores.
- Magnets, Wooden Knobs and Handles, etc. from Hardware, Hobby and Teaching Supply Stores.
- The Independent Toy Stores Association of Canada is a group carrying specialty toys for children with disabilities. c/o Nancy Ross, The Creative Child, 37A Colborne Street, Toronto, Ontario. M5E 1E3.

Augmentative Communication Specialist

A full time position is available August 1, 1987, for an augmentative communication specialist to work with in the Easter Seal Communication Institute, providing consultation and training to educators in Ontario.

Applicants must have professional training and experience, knowledge of techniques and strategies within augmentative communication systems, proficiency in signing and in at least one other technique, experience with educational programs of students using augmentative systems, willingness to travel in Ontario and interest in working with instructors.

Apply in writing by April 30, 1987 to:

**Mrs. S. McNaughton,
Easter Seal Communication
Institute, 24 Ferrand Drive,
Don Mills, Ontario, Canada
M3C 3N2**

About the Publisher

The Easter Seal Communication Institute (formerly the Blissymbolics Communication Institute, established in 1975) has worked since its inception toward enhancing the lives of nonspeaking people. In its early years the Institute's primary focus was the development and application of Blissymbolics as an augmentative communication system around the world. This role continues but within a broader mandate that reflects the philosophy and perspective of its professional staff.

ESCI supports effective communication by nonspeaking people through:

- (1) advancing augmentative communication techniques and strategies that contribute to cognitive, social and emotional growth;
- (2) drawing attention to the quality of the learning experience and identifying those types of augmentative communication instruction that contribute to cognitive, social and emotional growth;
- (3) educating, informing and influencing those who are in a position to make positive life changes for nonspeaking people.

A Protocol for the Assessment of the Communicative Interaction Skills of Nonspeaking Severely Handicapped Adults and their Facilitators

JANICE LIGHT AND
DAVID McNAUGHTON

This report presents an assessment protocol which was developed by a team from the Augmentative Communication Service of The Hugh MacMillan Medical Centre. It assists the trained clinician in assessing the communicative interaction skills of nonspeaking severely handicapped adults and their facilitators. Included in the report:

- a review of related literature within the field
- a conceptual model of the assessment process
- documentation of the specific assessment and goal setting procedures
- a case study to illustrate the assessment process in relation to a specific client and facilitator.

Soft cover, Price \$15.00 +
coil bound 15% shipping
8½" x 11" and handling
161 pages

Available from:
Easter Seal Communication
Institute, 24 Ferrand Dr.,
Don Mills, Ontario M3C 3N2.
Telephone: (416) 421-8377

New from DADA (Designing Aids for Disabled Adults)

PC A.I.D. (Alternative Input Device)

Designed for IBM users, this device bypasses the IBM keyboard and allows data entry through alternative input devices. PC A.I.D. emulates the IBM keyboard by translating signals from a simple on/off switch into commands and characters recognizable by the computer. Several translation methods are available,

including single and dual switch morse code, and scanning.

PC Serial A.I.D.

PC Serial A.I.D. allows commercially available keyboards designed specifically for disabled people to be connected to the IBM via the serial port.

Tomey Talker

The Tomey Talker is a portable communication device designed for physically disabled, nonvocal individuals. The unit has a built in library of 1400 words and phrases. Using a numeric keypad, user's can create their own "user" vocabulary. Words can be accessed through keyboard entry, or by single switch.

For information contact: DADA,
1024 Dupont Street, Unit 5, Toronto,
Ontario, Canada, M6H 2A2.
Telephone: (416) 533-4494

Augmentative Communication: An Introduction

EDITED BY SARAH W. BLACKSTONE AND
DEBORAH BRUSKIN

Augmentative Communication: An Introduction provides state of the art information relating to topics included in the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association augmentative communication curriculum guide. Objectives and study questions are provided in each chapter to help students organize information. Contributing authors include:

David R. Beukelman
Carol Cohen
George Karlan
Arlene Kraat
Lyle L. Loyd
Pamela Mathy-Laikko
Howard Shane
Gregg Vanderheiden
David E. Yoder
Kathryn Yorkston

This book will be of interest and value to both beginning and experienced professionals.

450 pages

Soft Cover

Published by ASHA

Available from:
Publication Sales, ASHA,
10801 Rockville Pike,
Rockville, Maryland 20852,
U.S.A.
Price: ASHA members \$22.50 U.S.
nonmember \$35.00 U.S.

Available in Canada
Easter Seal Communication Institute
24 Ferrand Drive, Don Mills, Ont.,
Canada, M3C 3N2
Price \$48.00 Canadian Funds

Express Yourself: Communication Disabilities Need NOT Be Handicaps

PEG JOHNSON

Express Yourself: Communication Disabilities Need NOT Be Handicaps is a book about portable augmentative communication devices that enable communication disabled persons to communicate at home, school and work. It includes descriptions and pictures of over fifty portable communication devices, that range from the most basic to the very latest state-of-the-art technology, for individuals who are blind, visually impaired, deaf or hearing impaired, speech impaired and motor impaired.

The book includes several examples of communication disabled individuals whose lives have been greatly enriched by the use of augmentative communication devices. We learn through their experiences what severely communication disabled individuals can accomplish through the use of augmentative communication devices.

The book focuses on two major areas; selection including assessment/evaluation, and funding. Numerous specific, practical ideas and suggestions are included in each section.

Soft cover Available from:
182 pages Pegijohn,
Price \$9.95 (U.S.) 6432 Fifth Ave.
+ \$2.00 handling. S. Richfield,
MN 55423 U.S.A.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

ESCI Special Interest Seminars

In Toronto, Ontario

The Easter Seal Communication Institute (ESCI) holds a series of one-day seminars throughout the year on a variety of topics related to the application of augmentative communication. Seminar topics include:

- Orientation for Educators with an Augmentative Communicator in the Class, June 10
- Blissymbols and Technology, August 20
- Programming with an Augmentative Communicator in the Class, September 17
- Language Arts and Augmentative Communication, October 6
- Classroom Dynamics with Augmentative Communicators, October 7
- Student Interaction with Augmentative Communicators, November 4
- Curriculum Adaptations for Augmentative Communicators, November 5
- Reading through Blissymbolics, November 12, 13
- Practicum to Blissymbolics Independent Study Program, October 5, and November 6

Contact: Training Co-ordinator, Easter Seal Communication Institute, 24 Ferrand Drive, Don Mills, Ontario. M3C 3N2.
Telephone: (416) 421-8377

Graphics for Augmentative Communication

In Toronto

- April 27, 1987

Guest Speakers include:

Faith Carlson
George Karlan
Ellen Kravitz
Gail VanTatenhove
Geb Verburg
Bill Yovetich

Contact: Training Co-ordinator, Easter Seal Communication Institute, 24 Ferrand Drive, Don Mills, Ontario. M3C 3N2.
Telephone: (416) 421-8377

Blissymbolics Elementary Workshop

In Toronto, Ontario

- August 17-19, 1987

Contact: Training Co-ordinator, Easter Seal Communication Institute, 24 Ferrand Drive, Don Mills, Ontario. M3C 3N2.
Telephone: (416) 421-8377

Hamilton-Wentworth Communication Collective

"Total Communication for Nonspeaking Individuals"

In Burlington, Ontario

- April 24-25, 1987 at the Holiday Inn

Contact: Mrs. Shelley Deegan, Cerebral Palsy Centre, Chedoke-McMaster Hospitals, Box 2000, Station A, Hamilton, Ontario L8N 3Z5
Telephone: (416) 521-2100 ext. 7031

Communication and Disability

International Conference in Paris

In Paris, France

- July 6 - 13, 1987

The conference will bring together therapists, engineers, communications specialists, politicians, and people with personal experience of disability, especially those who have never been able to speak because of their personal or cultural handicap.

The conference will seek to define the basic questions concerning communication disabilities and to assess and forecast the influence of modern technologies as factors for social integration or for deconstructing human relationships.

Working languages will be French, English, Spanish and sign language.

Contact: CNAM, Congres "Communication et Handicaps", Laboratoire Brigitte Frybourg, 292, rue St. Martin, 75141 Paris Cedex 03, France.
Telephone: 33 1 42 71 24 14,
Ext. 379 or 759.

Severe Handicaps Alliance for Public Education (SHAPE)

In Edmonton, Alberta

- May 6-8, 1987 at Fantasyland Hotel, West Edmonton Mall

"Severe and Multiple Handicaps Alternative Futures"

Contact: Dick Sobsey, Conference Co-ordinator, Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2G5
Telephone: (403) 432-3755

Trace Center Workshops

In Billings, Montana

- April 2-3, 1987 at Eastern Montana College

"Selection and Application of Microcomputers for Disabled Individuals"

In Mt. Clemens, Michigan

- May 14-15, 1987 at Macomb Intermediate School District Educational Service Center, Mt. Clemens, Michigan

"Development of Communication and Interaction in Nonvocal Children and Adults"

Contact: Workshop Co-ordinator, Trace Research and Development Center, Room S-151, Waisman Center, 1500 Highland Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin 53705-2280 U.S.A.
Telephone: (608) 262-6966

Don't you agree?



These people have a right to speak for themselves – about their feelings, their dreams, their ambitions!

That's where PRC fits into these pictures. Our goal is to provide ways for people to achieve and improve the quality of their lives.

PRC offers products and services which allow the physically handicapped to gain independence. We make it possible for them to communicate, control their environment, and even operate a computer. **We give them Hope.**

If someone you know might benefit from our devices, please call.
Give us a chance to meet your special needs!



Prentke Romich Company

1022 Heyl Road • Wooster, Ohio 44691
Phone (216) 262-1984



BETACOM

723 Halpern
Dorval, Quebec H9T 1G5
Phone (514) 636-9267

WP23

Are You a Member of ISAAC? The purpose of ISAAC (International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication) is to advance the transdisciplinary field of augmentative and alternative communication, facilitate information exchange, and to focus attention on work in the field. For more information, write to: ISAAC, P.O. Box 1762, Station R, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4G 4A3.

ANNOUNCING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
ZYGO Canada
 (ZYGO Rehabtek, Inc.)
 TO SERVE ALL OF CANADA



NOUS VOUS ANNONÇONS
 L'INAUGURATION DE
ZYGO Canada
 (ZYGO Rehabtek, Inc.)
 AU SERVICE DE TOUS LES CANADIENS



Lightwriter

TETRA^{scan}™II

scanWRITER™

notebook™

GEWA

After 12 years of providing superior design and craftsmanship of devices for the disabled from our Oregon plant, it is particularly exciting to work with you, our valued "Northern" customers, in this most personal and direct way.

You will now receive:

- more effective customer service
- a comprehensive RENTAL PROGRAM
- fully warranted ZYGO products **shipped and serviced within Canada!**

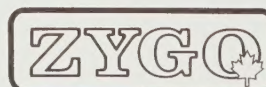
Contact the headquarters office shown below whenever you need assistance—or have your local equipment supplier do so for you.

Depuis douze ans, notre usine de l'Oregon offre des appareils de conception et de fabrication de haute qualité aux personnes handicapées. Nous avons maintenant le plaisir d'offrir un service direct et personnel à notre clientèle canadienne.

Vous recevrez désormais:

- des services après-vente plus efficaces
- un programme compréhensif de LOCATION D'APPAREILS
- des produits ZYGO entièrement garantis, **livrés et réparés au Canada même!**

Si vous avez des questions, communiquez avec notre siège social, ou demandez à votre fournisseur de le faire pour vous.



ZYGO REHABTEK, INC.
 842 West 15th Street
 North Vancouver, B.C. V7P 1M6
 (604) 988-5899